



River Guide 5: Rocky Ford to Norden Bridge

River Mile: 27 to 35.2

Stream Gradient: 9.1 feet/mile

This river stretch is infrequently floated compared to upstream portions. If putting in at Rocky Ford get permission from the landowner and launch your craft below the rapids. Refer to the Niobrara National Scenic River brochure and map to locate the sites below.

Rocky Ford to Egelhoff's Rapids



Egelhoff's Rapid

The river flows swiftly eastward. Coleman Creek soon enters on river left. After passing Muleshoe Creek the sound of **Egelhoff's Rapids** (Class II+ or III-) will be heard. Pull out on river left and scout this rapid. This rapid can be treacherous in high water. You can portage on the left side. The main channel narrowly

snakes through bedrock and plunges over a rock shelf into a tumultuous pool. The current is swift – once committed to this channel there is no escape. During high water levels a large haystack greets boaters at the drop-off and a strong eddy (whirlpool) lies to the right.

Nature Falls to Kuhre's Rapid



Nature Falls

Look for the old river channel on river right just below the rapids. Just downstream is a nice waterfall. About a half mile below this falls, you'll pass through a constricted part of the river called **Egelhoff's Narrows**. In another half-mile you'll see the old **Rock Barn** on river left. A landing and campground are located here. Over the next five miles the river

valley widens and is often shallow. A sufficient depth of water is usually present throughout the summer months, but during dry conditions you may need to occasionally pull your boat over shallow sand bars. Choosing the correct channel is truly an art. Two miles downstream is **Kuhre's Rapid**. (Class I)

Kuhre's Rapid to Norden Bridge

One and a half miles downstream Fairfield Creek enters innocuously on river right. A falls can be heard or seen just upstream. About a mile and a half further on the Norden Bridge spans a narrow portion of the river. Just upstream lies a hidden drop and a long, narrow trough with fast water called the **Norden Chute**. Seasonally



Norden Chute and Falls

posted signs direct boaters to a portage trail on river left, or you may wish to portage on the rock shelf beneath the bridge, staying well away from the chute. **WARNING -- Do not attempt to tube or canoe over these falls!** The water is very deep and obstacles and snags may be hidden in its turbulent depths. The Norden Chute is also a favorite place for local

anglers to catch channel catfish. If your trip is ending here, you can park on the north bank, downriver of the bridge. You must call the Niobrara Valley Preserve (402-722-4440) to get permission to park your vehicle and take out/launch vessels here. Overnight camping and fires are prohibited. Be sure to take your trash with you.

Below Norden Bridge



Bald eagle scans the river for prey

Downstream of Norden Bridge (41 more miles to the terminus of the National Scenic River at Highway 137) the river is infrequently floated because of seasonally shallow water conditions and sandbars. There are no signs posted to warn paddlers of hazards. This portion of the river

retains a very rural flavor; cattle, partial fences, brush piles, uprooted trees, sandbars and other obstacles may be encountered. There are three established launching sites downriver of Norden Bridge: Meadville, highway 7, and highway 137.